

Tourism Workforce Assessment Forum

Prescott

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Discussion Topic 1: Recruitment, Retention & Succession

What non-traditional strategies do you use to recruit entry-level employees?

- We have in the forest service to encourage people to stay in school; we provide them with some employment. We've been successful with front desk work. High school and college
- I have a small consulting firm, there's a lot of turnover cause of lifestyle issues. I provide flexible hours, even Sunday work days if people want. Works for people who are over-employed find these people through networking
- At the fairgrounds, we started a school, achieve academy, we've been fortunate to take high school levels and working them into jobs, we have racing for 3 months, we are seasonal, we jump from 25 to 300 jobs and then we work students back into classes – achieve is grades 4-12, a charter school
- The program I run subsidizes the charter school
- I don't have paid staff, but we students come in to learn responsibilities, which expose them

What non-traditional strategies do you use to recruit management employees?

- Our industry is a bit stagnant; we've had the same people for many years. The climbing of the ladder is the problem. It's hard to keep someone long enough to train them to go up the ladder. Problems exist back and forth, cause of the nature of our industry—racing
- Forest, we do national searches for key positions. We advertise through federal agencies, and we have demonstration programs to advertise outside the agency which increases our reach
- Phoenix promotes from within, we're now moving people around due to the hiring freeze
- College is doing a national search to find a college president.
- Is this an attractive community for national searches?
- I think so
- Higher staff people are hired at a national level. This region is growing. There are not enough jobs for the talented labor pool. Locals have to compete with country

Besides wages, what factors contribute to employee turnover?

- I would say in the younger people it was work ethic, especially in restaurants. So many people don't have the wherewithal to work for something.
- There are a lot of jobs that are the same. They are in the same wage range and there's not much to stop you from leaving. No incentive to stay and lots of employers don't offer benefits to stay
- A number of hotels with the chains coming in, they can't compete for the workforce because they don't pay the same wages
- And chains do offer benefits
- Even the major hotels and restaurants can't do it here
- We'd like to see more support from the governor's office. We have a situation where they want to put racing out of business—it's a constant battle. People see this and aren't persuaded to stay cause of politics
- We're a highly mobile society; we have a lot of immigrants, non-natives
- And the access now, which helps keep us mobile

What are you doing/could you do to attract young people to consider a career in the tourism industry?

- YC has partnered with NAU, my hope is that they have a local school to support restaurant/hospitality and it would create work study opportunities
- Tourist center I work, most of my people are over 75. My dream is to get younger people there. They won't do it for nothing. I can mentor and teach about tourism, but the kids don't want to come in. Mentor programs and internships
- Could there be job sharing to teach people the different aspects of the jobs and of the industry and see where they fit best. Is it worthwhile to explore?
- High school, middle school ... kids come out of school and there's a huge gap. People look down on jobs that are in hospitality—they call it flipping burgers. Young people aren't looking for jobs; they're looking for an opportunity
- They want to go straight to the top and not pay any dues

How are you preparing employees for advancement in your organization?

- Everything...if you go into orgs and ask how much mentoring is going on, the number is going to be too small. People feel too busy. But if we're not mentoring, we're creating vacuums. I think this is happening across the board.
- There's an expectation that employees will find their way
- People are overworked and there's no time to develop this
- Lack of mentoring drives back to loyalty. Loyalty isn't one way, it has to be breed
- In forest service we do lots of handholding, we ask people to work in different areas of the organization to encourage their interest and see where they will go. We do that thru formal training and experience and temporary assignments. Probably the biggest reason why we have such a loyal team
- Marriott probably has programs established to help their employees. In my own business, you work with kids' day in and day out. Yes, we had loyalty but then they graduated and left

Are there jobs that a guest worker is well suited?

- Federal government won't have them. It's to allow foreigners to work and pay taxes here
- Gaming will never be able to do that cause of mandates
- This is what I hear when we do job development: young people can't be dependent on work ethic. Lots of employers say maturity is maturity no matter what background or language. They are worth the opportunity to work here
- In D.C. working with lots of South Americans, their work ethic is nothing what I've seen here
- We've spent years trying to build workforce and try to instill in our students to stay here don't go, if we bring in outsiders, we'll preclude opportunities for our kids
- I think the industry will be excited about this program. These outsiders will come and work hard for that little money. So if the need is there, then it will work
- Lack of pride in this industry, and that in turn impacts work ethic
- We have seniors working for benefits and have a great work ethic

Discussion Topic 2: Industry Trends

How do changing travel preferences affect your workforce and training needs?

- We get people that have no itineraries and travelers are more mobile, we need front desk people who are knowledgeable. They want to know what amenities exist, which is hard to do with so much turnover. We just installed a kiosk downtown
- People will travel through and you can see with the RVs, and people flying in too
- Some of this may tap into seasonal thing, when it's so hot down south, people are coming up here
- Travelers have so much more info cause of internet and they have higher expectations that the front line employees have the same knowledge
- Some of it is just lack of training. They are like concierges, they need to know everything
- Tourists have higher expectations and much more susceptible to disappointment
- Personal service is so important. Younger generation has a different lingo; you have a different feeling about paying that money

What other social trends...

- People like guided tours, pink jeeps and such. This is lacking here and the opportunity exists. 50+ generation wants this soft adventure (a kayaking trip on a lake or someone to come have everything ready for me)
- Does the community need to determine its niche and determine who we are going to cater to? Is Phoenix catering to younger people? We need to identify who we are going to serve
- We've got gaming. I built a Spanish bus tour, but I lost our bilinguals and now we are hurting for it. I've got a demand without talent to meet it
- Aging and Spanish speaking is essential. Soon we're going to have be bilinguals
- YC had a command Spanish program that was strictly for management and essential needs

What new jobs or job skills are emerging in your company or industry?

- Bilingual is super important here and you have lots of opportunities to climb the ladder in hospitality
- We had an incredible bike thing people came from all over. I see more bike trails, planners and such are needed for those
- We talk an older population, but fortunately our older pops are healthier and more active and there's an opportunity to market to this group. Supplies, mechanics ... people are willing to spend the money for entertainment
- Activities like this bring people in and help with opportunities with jobs

- Recreation of seniors, softball, and baseball is HUGE here. We need a workforce that can provide recreation opportunities for older travelers
- Need more entertainment for families
- Web master. We depend so heavily on this information and we need it in real time so we need this job/skills
- Gerontology...32% of 55 and older, we need these health care workers too

Over the next five years, what jobs and job skills areas are being phased out from your company or industry?

- In hotel front desk people might be disappearing
- The mini-bars, service yourself at any time—in-room entertainment, movies in the room and other things. People self indulge at their choice
- Travel agency should see a decrease
- Internet and airlines have stopped paying commissions
- In general, people who are specialized are going to be phased out. People who can clean a toilet, fix the internet, speak more languages, the more specialized, the more risk. So people will need more skill sets.
- Cross training is important. Ex. Someone mentioned a water conservation person on staff, but we realized we could cross-train someone
- The phone systems to talk to customer service
- Receptionists are being phased out, they should phase out telemarketers

Aging of workforce?

- A lot. I have 30-something employees over 65. When they are injured they don't bounce back, but I have to hold the job for them, but the doctors give them extended time off. That's killing us, they don't need the money, they just want the benefits
- In government it's a huge problem about the oncoming rush of retirees. I'm the only person in our office other than the receptionist under 50. It is especially hard in government to recruit younger people
- You get that with overpopulation. People should take step and start mentoring people and recruiting and they could have succession management easily. The silver lining in the older workforce maybe to start them out early on. The maturing workforce is more open these steps
- Replacing yourself. A lot of people in my age bracket don't plan to retire. We don't expect social security and I plan to continue to work
- Some people work and retire and get bored and want to go back

What intergenerational issues affect your workforce?

- The biggest difference is work ethic and reliability. Older generation finds it frustrating and younger generation doesn't get the dues paying
- The drug issue is a very divisive issue. Lots of employers aren't passing the test even up to 30years of age.
- Methamphetamines are huge in this part of the state. It affects every part of our community and its not improving. People don't get off that drug. There has to be done to reduce access
- There are all sorts of issues—drugs, legal, family
- Technology gap, many people don't use or understand this have to depend on younger people and this could cause problems and creates dependency or extra responsibility or even respect issues

Discussion Topic 3: Staff Development & Training

What are you currently doing to train and update the skills of your employees?

- We have to train for everything because gaming is so new. We train in computers, customer service, we have in-house training and we evaluate the number of hours of training for our employees
- We do informal trainings, with the generational issues ex. I've shown employees how to use Google
- With the new web page for the college, they had weekly sessions so everyone knew the site
- My training is 8 hrs a day, I'm constantly training. We do a lot of customer svc training. I think I can do more, but I do think college programs would be great for upper level management and older people
- Cross training, everyone in the organization has skills so if we could figure out a way to take advantage
- We have so much work for one of my guys, he doesn't have enough time to train

What educational partnerships does your organization currently have, and how could these be improved?

- We're doing a partnership with culinary arts at YC and at NAU, so we have juniors in high school that work with them to help teach them. This program will win increased interest in the industry. It is weak at best, but our young people have to see that there are opportunities there; the carrot has to be there at the end, let the employer show interest to keep them interested
- We run a summer youth program providing free labor where we pay the youth the wage and the employer gets a free employee. Out of 8 confirmed employers, only 2 showed. We did a job fair with a 50% show rate. It's hard to preach work ethic when you set a bad example
- I've always had a paid intern in my business, but I've never had a student referred to me through the colleges here. I know the value of an internship. I don't know that the educational side is doing their part to make the opportunities and the value of these internships

What needs do you or your customers have that you are unable to meet because your employees don't have the necessary skills?

- Life skills, soft skills that cuts across all industries. I hear it every day. We've all been guilty with our kids and not teaching them appropriately. We pour it on public education as their responsibility. It's impacting industry
- Teachers have so many demands on them so they focus on aims and such.
- Schools have to tap into the parents
- Stigma in fast food, as long as there is a stigma, people won't take these jobs
- Math
- Customer service skills are essential which is affected by constant turnover. And we could lose people, customers there.

What can be done to help prepare younger members of the workforce to appropriately service the needs of your customers?

- They need to know that they have a stake/ownership in all of this. They're being asked to meet the needs of those customers by being able to solve problems for those customers. Empowerment is so important to employees. It makes me feel good to know that my employees can solve problems, but it requires trust
- Mentoring
- Mentoring is so important. One in ten teachers takes an interest in their students. Those students are the ones suffering. We have teachers who have found a nice hiding spot and not doing the work
- Mentor your replacement. To promise someone an opportunity which may possibly be true, you have to look after yourself. The promise of a long career is gone, it's dog-eat-dog and kids need to know that.
- Mentoring [is something employees] can take that with them and they are more marketable and better skilled

Aging in place employees

- Flexible hours
- There are many seniors that come back after being bored and decided they want more. Benefits are also an incentive. We need to be aware of that and sensitive to that.
- Retirees can help certain industries, like small businesses, but the benefits don't exist in small businesses.
- Associations and industries could make it viable and benefit the industry and be more efficient. We'd inherit a huge workforce
- Ego gratification—lots of people come back to the workforce and they do require some more attention
- Training, technology and ideas, we have to slowly get them into it. Don't overwhelm them. Inch them in. tech support that is sensitive to older people
- Older workers will go to where they fit in and the networks create this atmosphere. Friendships and networks grow from their work

How will technology affect your staff training and development?

- It's incredible as far as speed and timing. There are so many things that can be taught online, but some need to be done in person and we didn't have this before. And this can be done in flex hours. Let people do this at their own pace
- One-on-one training is essential to restaurant industry. I don't think this is replaceable.
- It's a fallacy to stop everything and say 'you have to spend a day in training'
- They get fast when they are good and they become more efficient.
- All of these things are being driven by technology—logistics, purchasing, inventory control, etc.
- Small entrepreneurs can't afford these programs but they could benefit so much from it

